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# IS THIS THE HAPPIEST MAN IN THE WORLD?

WENDY MICHENER | AUGUST 20 1966



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# IS THIS THE HAPPIEST MAN IN THE WORLD?



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## IS THIS THE HAPPIEST MAN IN THE WORLD?

His name is John McMaster. Once he was a mess like the rest of us. Now he's a "clear," one of the saints of a new cult called Scientology — without a single "engram" left to bug him

WENDY MICHENER

SOMETHING VERY ODD is going on in Toronto. People are leaving the country, changing their occupations, giving up their children, leaving their husbands, wives, or lovers, changing their whole lives. All in the name of something called Scientology.

The whole thing got started quite by chance. A couple of years ago, someone left a book by former science-fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard in the studio of Toronto artist Richard Gorman. Like many of his friends, Gorman had been experimenting with drugs. Hubbard's book, a mystical mishmash entitled Dianetics, promised greater self-awareness and Gorman wanted to find out more. He wrote away to Washington to the Hubbard Guidance Centre and soon became a missionizing enthusiast for Hubbard's ideas about how everyone can get smart, happy, healthy and nice, quickly.

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Av Isaacs, his former dealer, says that when Gorman was converted he “seemed to glow with a love for all mankind.”

Gorman talked of nothing else and soon spread the word to Peter Munk, the millionaire president of Clairtone Sound Corporation, his wife Linda and about a dozen artists. A few months later John and Tue Farrell arrived from the Washington centre, complete with Hubbard guidebooks, Hubbard “Electropsychometers,” and set up shop.

Today Toronto has Canada’s first Scientology “org,” one of more than 20 offices of HASI (Hubbard Association of Scientologists International) established throughout the English-speaking world. Its membership is small — at most 100 in Toronto and 100,000 in the whole world — but devoted, and, as Scientologists like to point out, most of the world’s movements started out in a small way. Certainly, if the devotion of its members is any guide, Scientology is a potent force. And it is a growing one.

Scientology is not exactly a religion, a science or a business, but a triple-threat combination of all three. Its converts are as convinced as any religious zealot that their way is the only way and ought to be adopted by the whole world. Its system of conditioning the human psyche can be as convincing or as devastating as brainwashing. And it extracts fees from its followers as aggressively as any dance studio.

Just what Scientologists believe in is hard to pin down. Hubbard has written literally millions of words about it, and regularly makes new discoveries as to just what his philosophy really means. Over the years he has worked in notions taken from electronics, behaviorial psychology. Buddhism, Protestantism, and Madison Avenue. Put them all together and they spell happiness, for people who truly believe. "It's the best thing in my life," one enthusiast told me. "It's even better than sex."

Basically, what Scientology offers is that long-standing best seller: self-improvement, or in Hubbard's / continued on page 36

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"You sure know when you're around clears: beautiful people"

terminology, a superior state of "beingness." First, of course, you have to understand just what's wrong with the way you are now (quite a stumbling block for some people), and that is. you are suffering from "engrams." Engrams are unpleasant experiences you have had but probably don't remember, especially the ones that took place before you

were born, or in some previous existence. These engrams bother you because they are recorded in your “reactive bank” (a kind of subconscious mind) and sit there causing you to feel sick, or depressed, or to be mean to other people.

How can you get rid of them? Scientology discovered them, and Scientology has also discovered the only way of dealing with them. You “erase” them by means of “auditing” — a process something like going to confession or getting psychotherapy. Once you have located the bothersome things on your “time track,” you can be released from their influence. If you succeed in breaking your whole reactive bank you are known to your fellow Scientologists as “a release.” And when you’ve erased the lot, you are looked up to as “a clear.”

Starting point: Dianetics

“Boy, you sure know it when you’re around clears,” Linda Munk told me. “They’re such beautiful people.”

There are now about 20 “clears” in the world. The first one. John McMaster, graduated last March 21 from the clearing course at Saint Hill, the Vatican of Scientology. Since this breakthrough, people at Saint Hill are reaching clear at the rate of about four a week.

If any of this sounds familiar, it may be because you heard about it back when Scientology was known as Dianetics, and there were dozens of clears who turned out not to be really clear after all.

Dianetics first made its appearance 16 years ago in an article by L. Ron Hubbard in a science-fiction magazine. (Many scientologists, predictably enough, turn out to have been avid science-fiction fans, though some serious-minded fans such as Kingsley Amis find Hubbard an embarrassment.) Hubbard followed this up with a fat book on Dianetics: The Modern Science Of Mental Health. It was snapped up in six editions by thousands of eager converts. The cult caught on in Hollywood in 1950, and for one heady year Hubbard was a hero. Dianetic auditing was as popular as winning friends and influencing people, applying the power of positive thinking, dieting the macrobiotic way, or hypnotizing your party guests.

But the mental strain of do-it-yourself therapy proved too much for some of Hubbard's followers. Several ended up in mental institutions. Hubbard was denounced by members of the medical profession, among others, and he retired from the spotlight to build himself a better scientific platform.

Rejected as a healer, he reappeared as a kind of savior. Where Dianetics was supposed to effect mental heal-

ing, Scientology promises to make mere men into superior spiritual beings — “thetans” — who are not only free from the world’s ills, but can change their environment at will. (One of the many stories about Hubbard’s superior powers has it that when a microphone broke down at one of his public speeches, he simply keyed in extra power to his own voice and got along nicely without it.)

Now Hubbard has managed what almost amounts to a second coming. After establishing Scientology as a church in the United States (tax deductible and free from interference), he moved his worldwide headquarters in 1959 to a stately Sussex Manor called Saint Hill. Today he lives on his own estate in Rhodesia and commutes to Saint Hill to oversee operations, and keep a check on his “technology.” By now most of his teachings are either in books or on tape. He rarely lectures, even to the most advanced students.

To date, at least eight Canadians have been to Saint Hill and some are still there, working. Richard Gorman is in charge of designing everything for worldwide distribution: posters,

throwaways, pamphlets, books, inserts; and John Okeefe, a former Toronto free-lance journalist, has become a Scientology staff writer. Somehow, by the time ordinary people have been audited into superior states of existence,

they naturally find that they want to dedicate themselves to helping others join the club.

Linda Munk came back to To-

ronto in July after a year's study there, which took her almost all the way to clear. "I love it at Saint Hill," she told me. "Ron is such a beautiful man, such a marvelous person, and so is Mary Sue [his third wife]."

Back in Toronto, things are not quite so beautiful. Until recently, the org operated out of a grubby thirdstory suite above a midtown drugstore. The office walls were covered with signs, slogans, posters, charts, and a big board bearing such titles as Director of Success, Director of Communications, Director of Qualifications. Some of the titles had people's names after them, and all the names were followed by In-group initials — HAS, HVA, HRS and HAA, among others. The only beautiful thing there was a "Well, we done it" poster by Gorman, announcing the graduation of the first clear.

The goal: Operating Thetan

When I arrived at the office Mrs. Tue Farrell wasted no time in giving me a huge chart (Scientists love charts) showing just what higher states of existence were available through processing, training, and courses. The chart indicated seven levels of intensive processing through to



the state of clear with a small arrow pointing upward to the newly defined goal of “O.T.” or Operating Thetan. There were 12 levels of training, beginning with the elements of Scientology and ending with the clearing course.

However, not all these stages of in-

struction can be obtained in Toronto, Mrs. Farrell explained, “because we don't have enough staff to back-stop the technology.” In plain English, this means that anybody who wants to go all the way to the top of Scientology's chart must eventually raise enough money to study at Saint Hill. Nobody has yet reached O.T.

It was hard to connect this office with the ecstatic testimonials I heard from the converted. Why are artists who don't know where their next tube of Cadmium Red is coming from, prepared to spend \$25 for one hour with a Scientology auditor? What is it that appeals to people? And what is it that keeps them coming back for more?

To find out, Maclean's sent a research girl to sign up on her own. Jean (as I'll call her) was not known to anyone in the HASI office, and had no more idea what to expect than any other “wog,” i.e., outsider. She simply phoned for an appointment and showed up as arranged the next day. Mr. Farrell was ready for her, and within five minutes Jean was writing a cheque for \$25 for an “assist” — the simplest kind

of service, which in her case called for five hours of auditing.

Once signed up, Jean was passed on to her auditor, a nice young woman named Judy, who wore bell-bottom pants, a turtleneck sweater and a winning smile. During the sessions — two hours before lunch, three hours afterward — Judy and Jean sat opposite each other in a small room, with a Hubbard “E-Meter” between. Jean was required to hold onto two tin cans connected by wires to the machine, while Judy asked questions and watched the dial of the meter. Depending on the reading, Judy would either repeat the question or pass on to a new one on a long list in front of her. As the session went on she made very few notes and speeded up the questions.

Most of them were quite personal. Jean had no control over the direction they took or subjects discussed. Apparently as a matter of normal routine Jean was asked if she were gathering facts for anyone, if she had told any lies, and if she were holding anything back. These were questions Jean was expecting, and she was able to answer them without apparently arousing Judy’s suspicions. Judy reported no reading. Jean had no idea how the meter worked, but was astonished and impressed to find that it seemed on the whole to reflect her state of mind quite accurately.

There's nothing more impressive than a little technological wizardry, but in fact there's nothing magical about

Hubbard's E-Meter. It works by measuring the salt and moisture on the subject's palms and is, psychiatrists tell me, a crude form of lie detector which can indicate the degree of a subject's pleasure or discomfort. But Scientologists often credit the EMeter with spectacular powers; one girl told me the meter had helped her pin down the fact that she'd been alive, in a previous incarnation, in the year 1392.

After a while Judy's intense manner and the fierce repetition of certain questions began to make Jean edgy. She wanted to smoke but was not allowed to. She wanted to call it quits

## SCIENTOLOGY

continued

at lunch but was ordered to come back again. She did, and by the end of the day was really shaken up. "It was one of the most grueling days I ever put in," she says, "more grueling even than childbirth."

The worst part of the session came when Judy asked, "What did someone almost find out about you?" Once would have been bad enough, but Judy repeated this question again and again and again, for a full hour. Judy found out a lot of things in the course of that hour, but Jean still managed to hide three key things, three very personal things.

“By the end my hands were shaking. I could hardly hold the tin cans,” Jean recalls. “I was confused — almost a blubbering idiot.”

The next day, Mrs. Farrell told her what was wrong with her. Jean, she explained, was a “potential trouble source” who suffered from associating with “suppressive people.” To free herself, Mrs. Farrell said, Jean would have to sit down and write a letter to one of her “suppressive” friends, in which she “disconnected” herself.

Jean was also informed that what she really needed was another 25 hours of intensive processing, which would cost her \$500. When Jean protested that she couldn't afford it, she was offered a job in the Scientology office to help pay for it.

“For three days,” Jean told me later, “I was actually considering it. After a few hours of that brainwashing routine, nobody can think straight.”

The contract Jean was being urged to sign is more sinister than a mere agreement to pay a large sum of money. One clause in it requires you to disconnect from associates, friends or family if the Hubbard Guidance Centre decides such people are “enturbulative.” Whatever else that may mean, it certainly includes anyone who is critical of Scientology. Another clause prohibits you from having “any

other practice” used on you (apparently to stave off intervention by a doctor or a clergyman), and a third

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“Friendly as hell, noisy, crowded... and sell-sell-sell”

provides for the number of auditing hours to be extended at the centre’s discretion. The contract also stipulates that if you leave before they say you are ready to do so. the operators of the centre will not be responsible for your condition. (This provision seems more meaningful to anyone who recalls the cases of insanity arising out of Dianetics auditing. More recently, Scientology ran into trouble in Melbourne, where it is now banned by the Psychological Practices Act of December 1965.)

Scientology has many facets — virtually something for almost everybody willing to pay. There are prayers for those who want to pray. There is “touch assist healing” for those who believe in that kind of magic. There are courses in how to communicate, how to run a business, how to control your environment and how to be an executive. From your nearest org you can buy lapel pins, certificates, a selfportrait of Hubbard (\$10 U.S.) and dozens of Scientology books — The Problems Of Work, The Science Of Survival, The Creation Of Human Ability, The History Of Man, All About Radiation and, among others, Brainwashing.

Scientology's hard-sell tactics were never plainer than at the Road To Freedom Congress, held in Toronto last May to coincide with the visit of the first clear, John McMaster. The written instructions issued to the staff make it perfectly clear that the main orientation of the congress was, well, pretty commercial: "... Wear very bright colors and big smiles and be very safe to talk to ... We want to establish an atmosphere like a country fair — friendly as hell, noisy, crowded, colorful and sell-sell-sell." The congress was no country fair, but John McMaster's performance was a shrewd piece of oratory. In about 90 minutes he told the 70 people who turned up just what to think about Pavlov, Freud, psychiatrists, atomic energy, politicians, his own life story, and — most of all — his six-year achievement in becoming "clear." Throughout his talk he would snap his fingers and repeat a slogan for emphasis. "In the places where Scientology operates you will see people coming out better for it (snap), you will see people coming out better for it (snap), you will see people coming out better for it (snap)."

I was reminded that Hubbard once wrote, "By pounding the same drum and doing the same thing one is finally heard. There's an old rule: 'what I tell you three times is true.' If people don't hear the same thing being said at least three times, they believe it is impermanent."

After the lecture there was a stand-

ing ovation and several people approached him reverently for a private word of inspiration. Not surprisingly, the girl who first mentioned Scientology to me thought he was wonderful, but she was quite disillusioned to see that he had a big pimple on one cheek. In the higher states of existence people are supposed to be above such things. The reason, she'd been told, was that his mind had gone clear so suddenly that his body hadn't had time to catch up.

"We need more orgs"

After the congress, 24 of us attended a farewell service in a Chinese restaurant for a member who was resting in a funeral chapel in another part of town. After dinner, the Rev. Mrs. Beth Fordyce, of Detroit, took off her pearls, put on a cross and read a poem from the book of ceremonies of the Founding Church of Scientology, published in Washington in 1959. Most of the ceremonies read like folksy parodies of the United Church, but the funeral service is built around the idea of reincarnation.

"We thank you for coming to us.

We do not contest your Right to go away.

Your debts are paid

This chapter of thy life is shut.

Go now, dear Josephine and live once more in happier time and place.”

Everyone chorused a “Good-by, Josephine,” and the last of the Sundaynight diners paused sheepishly over their garlic spareribs.

The shoptalk resumed. “We need more orgs,” said the clear, reaching

for the inevitable fortune cookie. Everyone waited to see what chance would bring to this totally happy, totally good man. It was as though Saint Peter were playing bingo in a church basement. He read it out: “A dark woman is about to enter your life.” Everyone laughed and speculated. Someone gave him a second fortune cookie. Inside was a hand-written fortune: “We all love you.”

“It’s true,” said the Rev. Fordyce and McMaster fairly beamed with appreciation.

I asked why he smoked. “I like it,” he said. “I would stop if I thought it was harmful.”

Suddenly, the lady minister seized my right hand in both of her warm hands, fingers reaching lightly up to my pulse.

“You’re the one person I can’t figure out here,” she said, fixing me with the full wattage of her attention. I stared



back, an eye for an eye. “What has impressed you most about us?” she asked, a human lie detector.

“The way you are all so nice to each other.”

She released me. “Yes, that was a marvelous moment for me, when I realized that as a Scientologist I could travel anywhere and always have friends.”

Mrs. Farrell couldn’t help enthusing over the success of the congress. “We did really well,” she said. “We made our expenses yesterday. Everything today was pure gravy.”

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ly now,” said Ron Tree, a  
**THE GREAT BEER SCARE** Hill.

AUGUST 1966

By GERALD TAAFFE  
e clear. ★

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